

STAND UP – SIT DOWN Mental Retardation

Objective

This activity is designed to show the frustration experienced by some people with mental retardation when given a new task to learn.

Materials

None

Procedure

Tell the children that you are going to give them a long list of things to do. You will tell them only one time. They may begin the activity *only after you have read the entire list*. They will not be allowed to ask any questions.

Read (briskly):

Stand up, sit down, stand up again, touch your toes, turn around 3 times, put your right foot up, put it down, pat your head 2 times, clap your hands 2 times, face the back of the room, face the front of the room, sit down, stand up, stamp your feet 3 times, smile, cough, wave good-bye and sit down.

Discussion

Observe the children's reaction. Notice those who persevere and those who give up in frustration.

Explain to them that this is what it feels like to some people with mental retardation when they must learn something new.

Ask them what could be done to make the task easier.

Repeat the list of directions at a slower pace, one by one, allowing children to succeed at the activity.

After they have finished, explain to them that for people with mental retardation, directions may need to be given one by one, in order. They may feel confused when they have to do many things at once. They are not "stupid" it's just that it takes them longer to learn.

* Adapted from Special Pastoral Ministries, Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon, 1982, *Welcome to My World*

